

MORE ABOUT COPESTAKE, CRAMPTON & CO

This company, which is thought to have used the first perfin, holds some fascination for many perfin collectors. Some two years ago, our Secretary, Dave Hill, wrote an article entitled **Underprints & Perfins** in "Gibbons Stamp Monthly". The following letter was received by Dave from a Mr. L. W. Pheby which has great social and historical interest. Mr Pheby is allowing me to quote from his letter.

“Your article on "Underprints & Perfins" was of particular interest to me because back in 1940 I was an employee of Copestake Crampton & Co, albeit for only a few months as explained later.

As you said, Copestake, Crampton & Co were wholesale Drapers and in 1940 had a warehouse and offices in Bow Churchyard, which was a cul de sac adjoining St Mary le Bow Church in Cheapside in the City of London. St Mary le Bow Church is of course well known for "Bow Bells" and the link that states that to be a true "Cockney" you have to have been born within the sound of those bells. The Company was, what would probably now be called "old fashioned", and when I was interviewed for and subsequently got the job of "office boy" (the lowest rank in the office) I was required to sign a "contract of employment" in a bound book. My salary was, if I remember correctly, the sum of £3-10

shillings per **month**, say 85p per week in today's money. This salary was paid monthly in arrears and on payday I collected my earnings from the pay office in the basement. The money was handed to you in a small black tin box with your number on it and you returned the tin so that it could be used next month: all very economical: no wasteful pay packets!

Now to explain my "Perfin" connection. I was employed as the office boy in the Post Room and I used to go round all the various departments distributing and collecting the post. The Post Room was on the first floor overlooking the road known as Bow Churchyard which led up to Cheapside. On the bench in front of the window was the machine that affixed the "perfin" stamps to the envelopes. One of my jobs was to put the envelopes through the machine (approx 24"x16"x16" in size), by turning the handle. The stamps came to us in large reels and were loaded into the machine by my "boss", a very pleasant lady. So I may have been responsible for the use of the "perfin" stamp illustrated in the magazine! (As illustrated by Dave's article in Stamp Monthly)

I was very happy working at Copestakes but sadly my job did not last very long because of course the "Blitz" had started in the autumn of 1940 and one day after a particularly heavy night raid I arrived (eventually) at Cheapside to find that the warehouse and offices in Bow Churchyard had been badly damaged. My "employment cards" were eventually returned to me undamaged and I imagine they had been held in the safe in the basement. The company did try to find me another job but as my home was damaged by air raids my parents left the district. After I returned to England from the Far East after my war service, I was given to understand that Copestake Crampton & Co had had offices in St Paul's Churchyard but I could find no trace and have no idea what happened to the company."